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# News Release

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## ‘Patriot’ Flies Again at Dale Hollow Lake

**NASHVILLE, TENN. [November 15, 2006]** — An American Bald Eagle, that only a few months ago was grounded in a pasture in east Tennessee, once again sails above the mountains around Dale Hollow Lake, thanks to a number of friends who came to its rescue. It was released by officials Nov. 9.

Dough Neatherly, of Alpine, Tenn., in Overton County, first spotted the mature eagle in January “just standing in my pasture”. He called the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Wildlife Officer Andy Barlow responded.

As Barlow approached the female Bald Eagle, it flew a short distance with difficulty and landed near a patch of woods. A short time later Barlow said he was able to catch the bird of prey, while wearing thick leather gloves, in a patch of woods, where it was unable to fly and immediately transported it to the Ragland-Riley Veterinary Clinic in Livingston. Dr. Ragland examined the eagle and could find no visible wounds or broken bones in his initial check-up. He did feel it was somewhat ‘addled’, ‘calm’ and ‘tame’ acting, unusual traits for such a bird of prey.

Ragland fed the bird with a tube, kept it overnight, then released it to the care of Lee Barclay, director of the Upper Cumberland Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service employee in Cookeville.

Over the course of a day and half, Barclay offered the bird raw chicken gizzards and lean beef

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which, after initially refusing, it ate readily. It then ate a second helping that also included a large mouse. Barclay then transported the eagle to the American Eagle Foundation (AEF) center in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., at Dollywood.

With facilities designed to house and care for eagles, the AEF staff was able to complete the rehabilitation process. In cooperation with Dr. Mike Jones of the University of Tennessee Veterinary School, the bird was reexamined and diagnosed with a serious concussion. Initially the bird refused to eat and the AEF staff had to force feed it. But after a couple of weeks, it began to eat on its own again, and eventually began to recover from the concussion and exhibit the wild tendencies for which it is known. The bald eagle, named “Patriot” in honor of the brave and courageous men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces that are fighting terrorists and defending freedom around the world, has been in a 150-foot flight cage at the AEF facility for several months, and has been responding and flying very well.

“The release of this majestic bird,” said AEF President Al Cecere, “is yet another reminder of the importance of eagle conservation in the U.S. and all those Americans who have died in the name of freedom. The efforts of the American Eagle Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency continue to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to see and enjoy the majestic eagle as it flies across America’s heartland.”

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade classes from Hilham Elementary School were on hand to witness the release on a beautiful sunny day. Teacher Michelle Nivens, whose husband is Dale Hollow Ranger Gregg Nivens, brought her students to Lillydale Campground for the event.

“My students are so excited to witness this release and I am happy for them. They are so looking forward to it,” said Nivens when her class arrived at Lillydale.

Each year Rangers at Dale Hollow host an Eagle Watch in mid-January and pick up guests at Lillydale, the Districts only campground listed in ReserveAmerica’s list of Top 10 from across the nation.